

## *Metro Operations and Construction*

### 309-01-Metro Operations and Construction

Fund: 309, Metro Operations & Construction	
Total Expenditures	\$58,210,989
Revenue:	
General Fund Support	\$10,015,420
Bond Revenue	\$4,918,523
Other Revenue	\$43,277,046
Total Revenue	\$58,210,989

#### ► Summary of Program

Fund 309, Metro Operations and Construction, contains the funds provided by Fairfax County to pay the County's allocated portion of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) operating and capital budget. The County subsidizes Metrorail, Metrobus and MetroAccess (paratransit) services, contributes to construction costs associated with the 103-mile Metrorail system, and contributes to the repair, maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of capital equipment and facilities for the Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess systems.

There are currently five Metrorail stations in Fairfax County, and Metrobus operates 87 bus routes in the County. In FY 2000, approximately 11,200,000 passengers boarded Metrorail at stations in Fairfax County and 5,049,000 passengers boarded Metrobuses in Fairfax County. Ridership on Metrobus and Metrorail has grown significantly during the past year. During FY 2001, systemwide Metrorail ridership increased 8.8 percent and Metrobus ridership increased 5.0 percent.

#### ► Funding Availability and Future Considerations

Fairfax County's contribution to WMATA consists of the General Fund Transfer to Fund 309 to cover operating expenses and General Obligation Bond Revenues to cover capital and construction expenditures. Applied State aid, local gas tax receipts and the Northern Virginia Transportation District (NVTD) bond revenues are also recorded in Fund 309 and used to offset WMATA's operating and capital costs.

#### Future Considerations:

There are a number of future considerations that will affect the County's contribution to WMATA. These issues include funding; ridership growth and capacity issues; construction and maintenance; and the regional bus study. Each of these areas is discussed separately below.

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### **Funding**

State aid for transit has grown only modestly during the past several years. Unfortunately, due to the statewide formula for allocating transit aid, Northern Virginia will actually receive slightly less transit assistance in FY 2002 than it did in FY 2001. During its 2001 Session, the General Assembly approved a two-year increase in the percentage of transit expenses that the state will reimburse. As a result, next year (FY 2003) the State will be permitted to reimburse 95 percent of transit expenses. However, it will be unable to do so, because there are not sufficient transit funds.

Two percent gas tax revenues fluctuate depending on the price of gasoline. In 1998, the County successfully convinced the other Northern Virginia jurisdictions to allocate gas tax revenues based on point of sale. This resulted in some increased revenues for Fairfax County that have been used for transit enhancements. However, it does not address the fact that these revenues vary widely from year to year.

Beginning in 1993, the General Assembly approved NVTB bond issues supported by local real estate recordation fees, right-of-way use fees and other revenues. Each of these bond issues contained funds for Metrorail construction or Metrorail capital. The County has applied all of the proceeds it received to date. This fall, the Virginia Department of Transportation will sell \$16 million in bonds approved in 1999. The proceeds of these bonds will fund additional Metrorail cars to address capacity constraints.

### **Ridership Growth/Capacity Issues**

As mentioned above, Metrobus and Metrorail ridership continues to grow significantly. The generally strong economy, increased congestion and the expansion of an employee transit benefit program (Metrochek) to all federal agencies have resulted in increased Metrorail and Metrobus ridership. In addition, WMATA opened the final segment of the Green Line (and the 103-mile system) in January 2001. With the influx of new riders, Metro is experiencing capacity constraints in several areas. One of the most significant areas is the need for additional railcars. Although Metro is currently receiving a new shipment of 80 railcars (the first new shipment since October 1993), most of these cars will be used to meet its current ridership demand and restore its spare ratio to acceptable levels. The WMATA Board of Directors recently approved initiating the purchase of 50 additional railcars to address future service expansions and capacity issues. Virginia's share of these cars will be funded from State transportation bond funds and other State revenues; however, no funds have been identified for future car purchases.

In addition to railcar capacity issues, WMATA faces a more serious problem of rail line capacity. The Metrorail system was designed as a two-track system. Trains stop at each station. With the exception of the Red Line, as each line approaches the downtown core, it is combined with another line. WMATA has the ability to run one train approximately every two minutes. As ridership increases, WMATA will first add cars to existing trains; however there is a limit of eight cars per train. At some point this capacity will not be sufficient, particularly when line extensions, such as the one proposed to Dulles Airport, become operational. WMATA is currently studying its "core capacity" to determine what measures can be taken to increase this capacity. Increased capacity on the downtown lines will likely be very expensive, because they are entirely underground. No funding has been identified for increasing track capacity.

Parking at Metrorail stations has been an ongoing challenge. The parking at most of the Fairfax County Metrorail stations is completely full. In January 2001, WMATA opened a new parking garage at the Vienna-Fairfax/GMU Station. This garage increased parking at the station by 1,700 parking spaces. There are also current projects to increase parking at the Franconia-

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Springfield Metrorail Station by 1,000 spaces and the Huntington Metrorail Station by 500 spaces. State funding is also available to increase parking at the West Falls Church Metrorail station. This project will follow the Franconia-Springfield expansion.

### **Construction and Maintenance**

Although the 103-mile Metrorail system is now operational, WMATA is in the process of closing out pieces of the project and proceeding with the last major portion of the system, the Branch Avenue yard. The County's support for the 103 Metrorail construction is also nearly complete. The final payment will likely be made in FY 2004.

As the 103-mile system nears completion, the region is discussing a number of possible extensions, including a rail line in the Dulles Corridor to Washington Dulles International Airport and Loudoun County. The cost of this line will be approximately \$2.2 billion. Although the Federal government and the State will probably pay a significant portion of the cost of this new line, Fairfax County will also need to contribute to the construction and the operating cost. The County's actual share of the construction cost has not been defined; however, it will likely be several hundred million dollars. There are several ways the County could fund its share of the Dulles corridor expansion. These include seeking voter approval to issue General Obligation Bonds or establishing a special Dulles Corridor tax district.

In addition to the cost of expanding the rail system, there will also be a very significant cost to maintain the existing system as it ages. WMATA has been increasing the local jurisdictions' annual contributions to its Infrastructure Renewal Program for the past two years. The cost of this program will continue to increase for at least the next three years. Fairfax County's annual share of this program for FY 2002 is \$6.4 million. This will increase to \$22.7 million in FY 2006. County staff is currently reviewing options for funding these contributions in future years.

### **Regional Bus Study**

WMATA staff is currently working with a consultant to conduct a regional bus study. This study is expected to identify unserved or underserved transit markets in Fairfax County, particularly cross-County markets. It will also identify other corridors, such as Richmond Highway where transit ridership could be significantly increased with the implementation of bus service and facility improvements. Such initiatives require funding for operations, buses, facilities and ancillary equipment. Currently, no funding has been identified to increase bus service into new markets or to expand existing service. Some minor improvements are implemented periodically. However, after the Regional Bus Study is complete, it will be possible to develop a multi-year program to increase bus service, if funding is available.

### **► Funding Methodology**

The County's portion of the total WMATA budget is determined by using several formulas that include factors such as jurisdiction of residence of passengers, number of stations located in a jurisdiction, the amount of service in a jurisdiction, the jurisdiction's population and the jurisdictions population density.

State aid, local gas tax revenues, and NVTB bonds are allocated to the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission on behalf of the Northern Virginia jurisdictions. These aid sources are then distributed to each jurisdiction via a formula.

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Funding for this program is not allocated within Fairfax County by Supervisory District. The Metrorail and Metrobus systems are considered on a Countywide basis, as many bus routes cross Supervisory District boundaries and the Metrorail system is used by citizens throughout the County.

### ► **Status of Program**

The specific projects in this program are undertaken by WMATA. Each year WMATA adopts an operating budget and several capital budgets, including the Infrastructure Renewal Program, the System Access Program and the System Expansion Program. These budgets include a variety of projects from parking lot resurfacing and station renovations to new parking construction projects and the development of new transit corridor projects.

In FY 2002, the County's share of WMATA's operating budget is \$47.8 million before external aid is applied. The County's share of WMATA's capital budgets is \$10.5 million before external aid is applied. The County pays WMATA for operating expenses and most capital expenses on a quarterly basis. Metrorail construction payments are made on a monthly basis. Approximately 25 percent of the budget has been spent so far this fiscal year. Staff expects that the remainder of the budget will be spent by the end of the year.

### ► **Mandate Information**

This CAPS is Federally or State mandated. The percentage of this CAPS' resources utilized to satisfy the mandate is 76 - 100%. The specific Federal or State code and a brief description of the code follows:

- State Law mandates the County's participation in WMATA. Virginia is a signatory to the WMATA Compact, an interstate agreement that established WMATA and governs its operation. In addition, the Board of Supervisors approved the Fifth Interim Capital Contributions Agreement (ICCA-V) that commits the County, subject to annual appropriations, to funding Metrorail construction; and the Interjurisdictional Funding Agreement that commits the County, subject to annual appropriations, to funding regional Metrobus service through at least FY 2002 and WMATA's Infrastructure Renewal Program through FY 2003.
- In addition, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 require regions such as the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area to reduce emissions. Support for Metrobus, Metrorail and MetroAccess service assist the region in meeting its clean air goals. (PL 101-549 and Clean Air Act Amendments).
- The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that regions provide alternative transportation for disable persons who are unable to ride fixed route transit services. In the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, MetroAccess fulfills this requirement. (29 CFR 215 and PL 100-82).